

Reynolds, Dave [LEGIS]

From: Heuton, David [DPS] [heuton@dps.state.ia.us]
Sent: Monday, February 06, 2006 6:12 PM
To: Reynolds, Dave [LEGIS]
Cc: Loder, Ross [DPS]
Subject: Answers to Questions of the Jan 26 Infrastructure Committee

Dave,

Sorry for the late response getting these answers back to you. Several members of the Transportation, Capitals and Infrastructure Committee asked questions on January 26th that I was not able to answer. I have received answers to those questions and submit the following:

Q. A committee member, I don't recall whom, asked that the State Patrol consider property owned by the state near the interchange of the Avenue of the Saints and highway 18. I related that request to the State Patrol and received the following response:

A. We have not placed any limitations on a site for P-8, other than we would like to have it near the Avenue and I-35. The location described here has that possibility. I believe this would be near Clear Lake. The property would need to be capable of handling a large facility, a large parking area and the potential for expansion

Q. Senator Zaun asked about the in-car computers and the age of the equipment, mentioning that he was told some of the equipment was purchased in 1991. Senator Zaun was concerned that not all Troopers had in-car capability and inquired as to the timeline for issuing remaining PCs.

A. It is our intent to deploy new cars and PCs together. We are currently working to retro-fit lower mileage 2005 vehicles with the computers. This will allow us to work from both ends to get more computers out. We are gearing up for the new cars and equipment and hope by the end of 2006 or early 2007 the issuance will be complete.

Our largest delivery on in-car computers were delivered in 2000. The units are primarily Pentium II 300 MHz. Some of the equipment such as printers, printer holders and scanners could be as old as stated by Senator Zaun. We have not ever had to make any general fund investment to equip our fleet with computers as we have been almost entirely funded through grant money from DOJ COPS More grant money, lowAccess money and an Intelligent Transportation System grant with support from the IDOT.

Q. Senator Zaun also expressed a concern regarding the issuance of vehicles. He was told that the vehicles are being issued slowly. I commented that the Department has not received shipment of any of the most recent order of 150 Crown Victorias. I indicated that the State Patrol garage was hit hard during the period of budget cuts as three retirements occurred there in 2001 through 2003 and positions were not filled because of uncertainty of funding. I also indicated that the Patrol has hired one additional full-time employee within the last few months and planned to hire another shortly. I indicated that the last order of vehicles were issued at the rate of about three per week and that the Patrol is hoping to issue 5 per week with the additional personnel.

A. The response provided in the committee meeting was correct.

Q. A member of the committee inquired as to the purchase of E85 vehicles and whether or not the Patrol has considered such an order. I replied that the limited availability of E85 would be a primary reason the Patrol has not ordered E85 in the past. He mentioned that an E85 vehicle could burn E10 fuel. Are there considerations other than availability of E85 fuel involved in the purchase of E85 vehicles? Cost? Performance?

A. We are looking at this possibility. E85 vehicles are not all available in a police package. We will continue to consider this, especially with the push for ethanol development growth in Iowa. Availability is a definite concern and needs to be addressed. We are not sure on the costs, but do believe it is more costly at the present time.

Engine performance relatively equal, however mileage drops significantly.

Q. A member of the committee mentioned that a trooper in his district expressed a desire for all troopers to be issued cell phones and asked why the Department had not requested funding for such a proposal. He said that the trooper indicated that there were locations in the state that State Radio did not provide good reception.

A. This has not been raised with command staff recently. We are working to address any voids in communications across the state, Dubuque area and northwest central Iowa have been identified as problem areas. We have plans to and are currently building additional communication tower equipment to place in those areas to resolve these problems. From personal experience having served assignments in both areas, they are not that good for cell phone reception either.

Let me know if I left anything unanswered.

Thanks.

Dave Heuton